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C O N F I D E N T I A L ALGIERS 002138

SIPDIS

NSC FOR ABRAMS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/19/2015

TAGS: [PBTS](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [AG](#) [MO](#) [WI](#)

SUBJECT: POLISARIO ASSERTS THREATENING STATEMENT WAS "NOT OFFICIAL", REJECTS TERRORISM, BUT APPEALS TO KERR-MCGEE TO SUSPEND OPERATIONS IN WESTERN SAHARA UNTIL SETTLEMENT REACHED

REF: A. STATE 192163

[1](#)B. RABAT 2144

Classified By: Ambassador Richard W. Erdman, Reason 1.4 (b) (d)

[1](#)1. (C) DCM delivered reftel demarche to Polisario "Ambassador" Mohammed Beissat October 19, stressing the total inacceptability of threats to American citizens and interests such as those contained in a Polisario press release October 12, and called for the Polisario to issue a statement retracting these threats. After checking with more senior Polisario officials, Beissat thanked DCM for his demarche "in the spirit of our bilateral dialogue," and gave DCM a copy of the Polisario's October 14 statement, which states the Polisario "has never resorted to terrorism and will never do so in order to make the legitimate rights of our people prevail."

[1](#)2. (C) Beissat claimed the Polisario's press service SPS had not officially released the threatening statement of October 12, which was written by "one of our officials" but not released officially. Beissat said the "unauthorized" statement had been issued in frustration at an announcement by Kerr-McGee that it intended to begin offshore drilling operations, a move that he insisted would violate international law.

[1](#)3. (C) He underscored the Polisario's strong objection to Kerr-McGee's operations in the Western Sahara, and the Polisario's insistence that they be suspended "until a settlement is reached," as French Total Elf and a Norwegian company had recently done. Beissat said, however, that despite Polisario's opposition to Kerr-McGee's operations, it did not mean to threaten Americans and was ready to provide further assurances if needed.

[1](#)4. (C) Comment: Beissat's assurances notwithstanding, the October 12 statement including the implicit threat is still posted on the SPS website, but dated October 13. We will follow up with Beissat to insist that SPS remove the statement from its website, as well as press again for an additional official statement denying any threat to American citizens or interests. Ambassador will also raise with Foreign Minister Bedjaoui in a meeting scheduled for early next week.

ERDMAN